



CALIFORNIA POULTRY FEDERATION

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May 18, 2005

Hon. Bill Thomas
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative THOMAS:

I am writing to urge your support for the free trade agreement with the Dominican Republic and Central America ("CAFTA-DR"). The California Poultry Federation and its member companies believe that CAFTA-DR offers significant benefits to the U.S. and the California poultry industry.

Currently, due to the existing Caribbean Basin Initiative preference program, over 80 percent of all imports and 99 percent of agricultural products from Central America already enjoy duty-free access to the United States. Yet, conversely, U.S. food, beverage and consumer products currently face an average duty of 15% in to the CAFTA countries and 20% into the Dominican Republic.

Under the agreement, each country in the Central America-Dominican Republic FTA will provide immediate, duty-free access for a minimum amount of chicken leg quarters. Remaining import duties on leg quarters will be eliminated as CAFTA is fully phased-in. Tariffs on products such as mechanically deboned poultry meat, wings, breast meat, and certain others will also be eliminated. Eventually, all U.S. poultry products will benefit from duty-free, quota-free access. USDA estimates that with CAFTA in place, U.S. poultry exports to the Central America-Dominican Republic area will increase significantly.

CAFTA is clearly a winner for U.S. agriculture and I again urge you to support it when it comes up for a vote later this year. If you have any questions or need additional information, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

BILL MATTOS
President

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